

International Mountain Day 10th Celebration at Utah Valley University



On December 2, 2019 I had the fortune to attend the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU) 10-year celebration of International Mountain day held at UVU. During the event, I was able to better, and more fully understand just how much the world depends on things such as mountainous terrain. As people come together to preserve the cultures, and lifestyles of those living in the mountains.



Dr. Baldomero Lago, Vice-rector for Global Engagement at UVU speaks during the event

According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO-UN), the mountains are for much more than just the culture, history, and unique lifestyles. In a post made to their website in November of 2017 they state, “In countries around the world though, mountains provide life-sustaining water, energy and food for over half the world’s population” (Why Our). In this statement they clarify that even though only a small portion of the world lives around them, over half the world is dependent on them. As was touched upon in the celebration, these mountains are not forever though. Without special protection and care from humans, and nature they will eventually disappear.

In the meeting it was also discussed that the mountains, and the surrounding terrain are home to many. How to engage those rural communities was a focus of the last speech. The FAO-UN also highlighted this when they declared that “Mountains are home to 13 percent of the world's population” (Why Our) While not a majority of the world by any means, there are still many people who live in and around the mountains. Those rural communities must be engaged, or many of the resources that those people represent. In the celebration it was noted that there are many, very doable steps that could be taken. As they focused on Rural Utah due to its relevance to the audience, it was mentioned that many rural towns have an economy dependent on something finite. The dependencies could be removed if they were further brought to the future. Part of the allure of our modern day and age is the digital communication. Through communication that brings us together for things like International Mountain Day we could bring those communities out of their dependencies on the fossil fuels and other finite resources. If they were to contribute to the society in other ways, such as coding, which was suggested at the event, they could allow their economies to flourish, and benefit the whole of the world, without having to urbanize those smaller rural mountain communities.

The event provided many angles on which are vital for us all to understand. Through the event I, a student at UVU was able to better connect with those issues, that just months ago I was unaware of. With organizations such as UVU’s own UIMF working to bring to light the dire circumstances that we now face in the mountains. With events such as this one being held in places where they are easily attended, and accessible to many, their causes can be made more widespread as to encourage finding their solutions. Without events such as the UVU International Mountain Day Celebration many of the students at UVU who desire to understand the problems of our world, and also our more local communities would likely not be able to. Events such as this should be

held more often, and advertised more so that not just students, but people of all ages, can understand the situations around them and how they could help.

- *Brennan Pearson a Utah Valley University/ Utah County Academy of Sciences Student of Social Studies and History*

Sources

“Why Our #MountainsMatter.” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 11 Dec. 2017, www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1070101/.